

The Massachusetts Food Innovation Trust Fund –

Putting the Commonwealth in the Forefront of the Food Revolution

All across our state, there is a food revolution that is changing the way we eat, the way we shop, the way our schools nourish our children and the way that our food sector strengthens our economy. You can see it:

- In Boston, where an innovative program at farmers markets to increase healthy foods on the tables of low income families has gone national;
- In Worcester County, one of the leading areas of direct farm to consumer sales in the country;
- In the creative regional consortia such as SEMAP, CISA and Berkshire Grown, among others, and;
- In fishing collaboratives such as Red's Best, which aggregate catches from around the state and sell fresh day boat fish at farmers markets.

We have also seen an explosion of farmers markets, starting with seasonal and now rapidly adding winter and year-round ventures. We have seen incubators, such as CropCircle Kitchen in Jamaica Plain, with long waiting lists for new tenants. And we have seen new for-profits and non-profits looking to stimulate new agriculture models, from urban rooftops and greenhouses to rural business opportunities for recent immigrants.

Now it is time for our state to add a new tool to the toolbox; one that will enhance the ability of our Department of Agricultural Resources to support these new ventures, in partnership with local and federal funding, private and foundation grants, and program-related investments. The Massachusetts Food Innovation Trust Fund would be structured to accept all such funds, similar to California's Fresh Works Fund that has raised \$264 million for fresh food projects, focused on inner-city food markets (which the MA fund would also support). As California is much larger, we believe that a smaller, yet more flexible fund, would work here.

Attached is an article from the blog of the Wholesome Wave Foundation, about a recent conclave in Boston to discuss public and private strategies for funding the "Massachusetts food revolution". We hope you'll add your input, and your support for creating jobs, supporting the food economy and eating healthier in the Commonwealth.